

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE PRESENT AGE

Sermon preached in the Brethren church at Philadelphia, Pa. on March 9, 1902, by Louis S. Bauman.

Text: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." Acts 15:14.

When once a woman of Canaan came seeking his blessing, Christ said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And again, John, the beloved, declares, "He came unto his own and his own received him not." And when Jesus sent forth the twelve he commanded them saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not; but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Again, Paul and Barnabas declared to the Jews at Antioch, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but, seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

From the above Scriptures, it is evident that Christ came only to his own, the "house of Israel," and that he brought nigh unto them as he so often declared, the kingdom of God, but they would not receive it. Israel, headed by her highest ecclesiastical authorities, cried, "We will not have this man to reign over us. We have no king but Caesar!" And thus in rejecting the King himself, of course they put from them the kingdom, also. They could not receive the kingdom without receiving the King.

Thus, having thrust from them the kingdom, first by crucifying the King, and secondly by the stoning in Stephen of the shining Holy Ghost, Christ representative. "Lo," cried Paul, "we turn to the Gentiles." In Acts 8:2 we read the closing scene in the life of Stephen. "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial." And then in the fourth verse we find that the disciples were "scattered abroad" and "went everywhere preaching the word." No longer did they keep out of "the way of the Gentiles," but went "everywhere." In the next verse we find that "Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them." Christ had said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." But now, Stephen stoned, and Israel, "uncircumcised in heart and ears," having thus made the final stroke in putting away from them the kingdom which had been brought so nigh, but never given, (See Acts 1:6) Philip goes to Samaria, Peter and John following; Saul is made a chosen vessel to bear his name unto the Gentiles; the Italian centurion, Cornelius, is given a vision which leads to his conversion; the Holy Ghost is poured out upon the uncircumcision; and the "times of the Gentiles begin." Thus we have the beginning of the present age.

It is now to be noted that at no place in the word of God is there a promise to establish the kingdom of God during the "times of

the Gentiles." The kingdom of God is *not* the Gentile church. When the kingdom of God is restored to earth it will be restored to literal Israel, and a literal Israelite will sit upon the literal throne governing the literal nations as both the prophets and apostles testify. (Lev. 26:42, 45, Amos 9:11, 15, Hosea 3:4, 5, Isaiah 11:10, 13, Jeremiah 3:12, 19; 30:8, 11, Ezekiel 34:11, 31; 37:20, 25, Micah 4:1, 7, Zechariah 14:1, 21, Daniel 2:44, Obadiah 17:21, Romans 11:12, 28, Acts 15:13, 16, Rev. 20:4, 6, etc., etc.) To spiritualize these Scriptures is to rob the earth of her most blessed hope, and to destroy the very Word itself. These Scriptures with hundreds of others mean a restoration of Israel to her former possessions in Palestine, and a second pre millennial coming of the "Son of David" as her beauteous king, or *they mean nothing!*

Of the children of Israel Jesus said, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," how long, O Lord, how long? Forever? Read on. "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And today God's chosen people have hung the harp on the willow as they sit by the rivers of all nations and weep. Thus, as said the prophet, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim." But, "afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." (Hosea 3:4, 5.) The "many days" of Hosea are the "times of the Gentiles" of Jesus. The "times of the Gentiles" in which we are living must have an end and Israel must have her "fulness." (Romans 11:12.) Israel will not always sit in blindness. (Romans 11:25.) Some day she will see in Jesus, the son of Mary, her king, she will look upon him whom she pierced and cry amidst her tears, "My Lord and my God." There will be no kingdom of God on this earth, there will be no such thing as a "Christian nation" until the prince of this world is chained and the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" comes a Lion not a Lamb. He will certainly come and devour his enemies (Rev. 19:11, 21.) and reign with his bride upon the earth a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4.) Come, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

God is not making any more effort to establish his kingdom on the earth, than he did to establish a theocratic kingdom at Ur of the Chaldees. Let us not be deceived into thinking the church is the kingdom of God. The church is the bride but not the kingdom. When scoffers boast that the church of Jesus is failing in its mission to bring peace to earth, good will to men; when they tell us that the influence of the man of Nazareth is on the wane; we reply that neither was such a mission given the church, nor such an era promised in this

age, nor did Jesus ever assert that his influence would increase among men unto the end of the present dispensation. But instead, after declaring that the days of the end-time would be as they were in the days of Noah, and of Sodom, with sad voice he said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8.) In the last days, instead of being influenced and controlled by the spirit of Jesus, "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, ect., despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3.) That does not look very much as tho the world were to grow better and better until by the evolution of character the day dawn. The New Testament views of the world in the latter days are essentially heathenish. Let infidels sneer, let skeptics ridicule, let unbeliefs boast, God's perfect plan, however, for this age will be thoroughly completed just as he in omnipotence and wisdom hath declared. Not one jot or tittle of his will in relation to his kingdom shall fail!

Jehovah's design for the present age was fully declared in the apostolic council which convened in Jerusalem to decide as to the necessity of circumcision for Gentile converts. "God at the first (or some fifteen years ago) did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." In other words during the "many days" in which Jerusalem shall be trodden under Gentile feet, and Israel shall be without king, prince, sacrifice or ephod, God will go with his special favor to the Gentiles and gather from every nation, kindred, people and tongue, an elect number for his name. Of the Gentile stones will he raise up a seed unto Abraham, not to make of them a new nation, root and branch, but to engraft them into the old original stock. They will be a new branch indeed, but not a new stock. God's oath-bound covenant with Abraham cannot fail of its fulfillment. Israel must have her fulness, and Abraham must forever remain the root. "Tho the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet thru the scent of the water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." God has not and will not take from Abraham, the kingdom. Today God is engrafting into Abraham a branch cut from the Gentile nations, and accounting that branch the very child of Abraham, by virtue of its Abrahamic faith. "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. * * * If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Jesus was the literal seed of Abraham. And in the new birth which is thru the power of the blood, and out of the very womb of Jesus, do we become and are reckoned as the very descendants of Abraham, and "heirs according to promise." Those who are not born thru the "travail of